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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 02/25/10

INDEX:

- 1) Top headlines
- 2) Editorials

Futenma issue:

- 3) Okinawa Prefectural Assembly adopts statement calling for relocation of Futenma facility outside prefecture (Asahi)
- 4) Hatoyama: "We must accept statement as an expression of the people's will" (Yomiuri)
- 5) Fukushima: "May deadline secondary to true solution" (Asahi)
- 6) SDP taking increasingly independent stance on Futenma relocation after Okinawa assembly passed statement opposing relocation within Okinawa (Mainichi)

Foreign relations:

- 7) Iranian Parliament chairman: There is room for discussion on Japan's nuclear proposal (Nikkei)
- 8) Yabunaka to visit Russia, discuss nuclear issues (Nikkei)

Defense & security:

- 9) Defense Ministry sends second GSDF contingent to Haiti (Nikkei)
- 10) Gov't extends PKO mission in Nepal to end of July (Mainichi)
- 11) U.S. service member accused of hit-and-run fatality pleads innocent (Yomiuri)

Politics:

- 12) Shimoji tapped to head PNP's Upper House election campaign (Asahi)
- 13) JAL Chairman Inamori tapped as special adviser to cabinet (Mainichi)

Economy:

- 14) U.S. Trade Representative calls for level playing field between Japan Post companies and private sector firms (Nikkei)
- 15) Japan-China talks on rare metals (Nikkei)

Media:

- 16) Nikkei to launch electronic edition next month (Nikkei)

Articles:

1) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:

Keidanren to stop offering advice to member firms on political donations

Mainichi:

Toyota chief announces at hearing plan to set up safety executive position for U.S. market

Yomiuri:

Toyota chief testifies about problem with electronic throttle-control system at hearing in U.S.

Nikkei:

GE joins hands with Fuji Electric to make power meters for next-generation smart-grid

Sankei:

Will Toyota chief's explanation that "too rapid growth was the

TOKYO 00000374 002 OF 008

cause" be accepted?

Tokyo Shimbun:

Asada takes 2nd place in short program

Akahata:

Political leaders of Caribbean states agree to create new mechanism excluding U.S.

2) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

- (1) H1N1 flu: Use experience in next outbreak
- (2) Nursing-care problems: Do not turn elderly people into refugees

Mainichi:

- (1) Disparity in average value of one vote: Number of single-seat constituencies in Lower House should be rectified immediately
- (2) Letter to Hatoyama administration: Nagatsuma needs dreams and charisma to attract bureaucrats and opposition parties as well

Yomiuri:

- (1) Diet battle: DPJ, LDP both remain unchanged
- (2) Global warming: Researchers' stance spreading distrust

Nikkei:

- (1) Envisage tax system that will support the future
- (2) SDP proposal will deepen anxieties about employment

Sankei:

- (1) Toyota hearing: Cool-headed and impartial approach required
- (2) School graduation ceremony season approaching: It is common practice to pay respect to the national flag

Tokyo Shimbun:

- (1) Disparity in average value of one vote: Correction needed to ensure equality
- (2) Total ban on smoking: Health must be protected by all

Akahata:

(1) Bikini Day on March 1: Pass on desire to ban atomic and hydrogen bombs

- 3) Okinawa assembly adopts written request to move Futenma out of

prefecture

ASAHI (Page 18) (Full)  
Evening, February 24, 2010

The Okinawa Prefectural Assembly unanimously adopted at its plenary session earlier today a written request urging the central government to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station outside the prefecture. It is the first case for the prefectural assembly to adopt a written request seeking the relocation of the base outside the prefecture since an agreement was reached in 1996 to return Futenma to Japan. The request is addressed to Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa, and others. Assembly members of the Democratic Party of Japan, the Liberal Democratic Party, and the Social Democratic Party will visit Tokyo shortly to deliver the request to the central government.

TOKYO 00000374 003 OF 008

Describing Futenma as "the most dangerous base in the world," the request underlines the need to swiftly close and return the base to Japan. The request also urges the central government to forgo the idea of relocating the base within Okinawa and to move it out of the prefecture or out of the country, saying that the wishes of the people of Okinawa are clear from the results of the 1997 city referendum and opinion surveys in which a majority expressed opposition to the base's relocation to Nago in the prefecture.

In a question-and-answer session after the request was adopted, Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima said: "I take the request seriously as a manifestation of the strong wishes of the prefectural assembly. I, too, have repeatedly indicated that moving the base outside Okinawa is desirable, and I want to see the central government consider the matter earnestly and actually move the base out of Okinawa."

This is the second time for the prefectural assembly to unanimously oppose relocation within Okinawa following the first time in July 1996. A resolution opposing moving Futenma to the Henoko district in Nago was adopted in July 2008, but at that time, the LDP and the New Komeito, which form the ruling camp in the prefectural assembly, opposed it. This time around, the two parties supported the resolution, judging that public opinion is growing for moving the base out of Okinawa. The Japanese Communist Party, too, supported the resolution in the end, overcoming its earlier reluctance.

4) Hatoyama: Written request adopted by Okinawa assembly should be taken seriously

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

Asked by the press corps at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) last night about the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly's adopting for the first time a written request urging the central government to move the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station out of the prefecture, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said, "We should take it as a manifestation of the popular will." He also said: "There is no change in our plan to reach a conclusion by the end of May."

Meanwhile, Social Democratic Party leader Mizuho Fukushima (who is also consumer affairs minister) indicated at a press conference yesterday afternoon that the government should not adhere to the end-of-May deadline set by the Prime Minister. She said: "It is necessary to conduct work in a way that values the feelings of the people in Okinawa, and time is secondary in comparison with what really matters."

5) SDP Fukushima: "Timing is of secondary importance"

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

Touching on Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's vow to reach a conclusion on the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station by the end of May, Social Democratic Party President

Mizuho Fukushima said in a press conference yesterday: "The prime minister's statement holds weight, but the timing should take a back seat to a real solution to the issue." She indicated that if no prospects are in sight for moving the Futenma facility out of the prefecture, the government should consider delaying the conclusion. In reference also to the Okinawa prefectural government's adoption

TOKYO 00000374 004 OF 008

of a statement calling for constructing an alternative facility outside the nation or the prefecture, Fukushima said: "It will be impossible to reach a real solution if the feelings and wishes of the Okinawan people are ignored. Careful work is necessary."

6) SDP taking increasingly independent stance on Futenma relocation after Okinawa assembly passed statement opposing relocation within Okinawa

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

Shinichiro Nishida

With the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly adopting a unanimous statement opposing the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) on Feb. 24, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) is beginning to push for relocation out of Okinawa or out of Japan even more strongly. At a news conference on the same day, SDP leader State Minister for Consumer Affairs and Declining Birthrate Mizuho Fukushima emphasized that "the cabinet should take this very seriously." As Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama is aiming at making a decision on this issue by the end of May, the SDP is poised to take an increasingly independent stance at the government and ruling parties' Okinawa base issues examination committee.

The SDP hopes to use the prefectural legislature's statement to change the trend toward relocation within Okinawa. The People's New Party began to consider an inland area in Camp Schwab as the relocation site in early February, and there have been moves in the Ministry of Defense to go along with this proposal. Alarmed by this, the SDP made the examination committee postpone the scheduled submission of relocation site proposals on Feb. 17 by stressing the importance of the coalition government and the steering of Diet affairs within the administration while the deliberation on the FY2010 budget bill is going on.

Along with efforts to persuade the central government, the SDP also took measures to influence the Okinawan assembly. Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kantoku Teruya, who was elected from the second district of Okinawa, told Mainichi Shimbun on Feb. 24: "After the Camp Schwab inland proposal surfaced, we urged the prefectural assembly to pass the statement as soon as possible. This will have an impact on the Hatoyama administration at an opportune time," revealing the background behind the adoption of the statement.

Behind the SDP's sense of urgency is a change in the balance of power among the floor groups in the House of Councillors. With defectors from the Liberal Democratic Party joining the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) one after the other, the DPJ-affiliated floor groups have come to control a majority in the Upper House even without the SDP's five seats. Even though Hatoyama is saying that he will make a decision on the Futenma issue that will "maintain the coalition government," SDP members are still concerned that the party may be "overridden" in the decision-making process.

Administration officials have reacted coolly to the Okinawan legislature's statement, which the SDP is relying on (for its strategy). At a news conference on Feb. 24, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano merely said: "I can understand why such a document was adopted." Unsure of the intentions of the Prime Ministers Official Residence, Fukushima told a news conference on the same

TOKYO 00000374 005 OF 008

day: "While the end of May is the time limit, a solution to the problem is more important." She thus indicated her apprehension that

support for relocation within Okinawa may increase inside the government on the pretext that time is running out.

7) Iranian Parliament chairman: There is room for discussion on Japan's nuclear proposal

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada yesterday held talks with Iranian Parliament Chairman Larijani on the nuclear issue at a Tokyo hotel. After the meeting, Larijani disclosed to reporters that Japan presented a proposal at the end of last year to provide uranium to Iran that has been enriched and processed in Japan for nuclear power generation. He then said, "There is room for discussion on the proposal. We want to deepen our discussions on it," expressing a certain level of understanding for Japan's proposal.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano said at a press conference: "If there is a role for Japan to play, we should go ahead with it. I think the proposal is part of Japan's international cooperation efforts."

8) Vice Foreign Minister Yabunaka leaves for Russia today

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday announced that Administrative Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka will visit Russia Feb. 25-26 to hold talks with Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov. Yabunaka and Denisov are expected to discuss the issue of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, as well as exchange views on the dispute over the Russia-held islands off Hokkaido.

9) Second GSDF unit sent to Haiti

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

The Defense Ministry yesterday dispatched about 40 Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) personnel as the second GSDF unit to join UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) in quake-devastated Haiti. The ministry plans to gradually send about 350 personnel by early March to replace the first engineering unit comprising about 200 GSDF troops.

10) Government to extend Nepal PKO mission until end of July

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

The government decided yesterday to extend the Ground Self-Defense Force's mission at the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) for four months through July 31. The decision follows the UN Security Council's decision in January to extend the UNMIN. The government plans to adopt an execution plan at a cabinet meeting on March 2. Since March 2007, six unarmed GSDF personnel dispatched in accordance with the UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) Cooperation Law

TOKYO 00000374 006 OF 008

have been observing arms and soldiers for the purpose of disarming insurgents of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist. This is the fifth time to extend the GSDF mission in Nepal.

11) U.S. soldier pleads not guilty in fatal hit-and-run case in Okinawa

YOMIURI (Page 38) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

The first hearing on the case of violation of the Road Traffic Law (hit-and-run) in which Clyde Gunn, 27, a U.S. Army staff sergeant stationed at the Torii Station, was charged with fatally hitting Masakazu Hokama, 66, unemployed, of Yomitan Village, Okinawa with

his car last November was held at the Naha District Court (presided by Justice Nobuhiro Takamori) on Feb. 24. During the arraignment, Gunn admitted that he hit Hokama with his car, but pleaded not guilty because "the site of the accident was pitch-dark, so pedestrians have the obligation to avoid accidents. I did not know I hit a person, so there was no duty to aid the injured."

According to the indictment, on the early morning of Nov. 7, Gunn hit Hokama, who was walking on a road in Sobe, Yomitan Village, with his car, causing Hokama's death from a cervical vertebral fracture. He apparently did not try to aid the victim and fled from the scene of the accident.

Gunn stated: "I felt an impact, so I stopped the car, backed up, and returned to the site, but did not find anyone who needed help." Gunn admitted that based on the conditions at the scene of the accident, he might have hit Hokama. However, he also cited the fact that Hokama was wearing dark-colored clothes and walking on a dark road before dawn. He said: "Pedestrians should wear luminescent clothes to avoid accidents," also denying the charge of negligent driving.

12) PNP Kamei appoint Shimoji to head election strategy office

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

In a press conference yesterday, People's New Party (PNP) President Shizuka Kamei announced the party's decision to appoint Policy Research Council Chairman Mikio Shimoji as the head of an election strategy office to be set up in preparation for the upcoming House of Councillors election. Upper House member Takashi Morita will take over Shimoji's duties as Policy Research Council Chairman. Shimoji will continue to serve as chairman of the Diet Affairs Committee.

Shimoji compiled a PNP report on the relocation of U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, calling for constructing a land-based Futenma replacement facility on Camp Schwab. With the government's postal reform bill also likely to be finalized soon, the party has concluded work on a number of its major policy challenges. In the summer Upper House election, the PNP will field its incumbent Upper House members in the Hiroshima and Fukuoka constituencies, as well as in the proportional representation segment. Kamei said in the press conference: "It has become necessary for another person to engage in charting election strategy (along with Secretary General Shozaburo Jimi)."

13) JAL Chairman Inamori tapped as special cabinet adviser

TOKYO 00000374 007 OF 008

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

The government decided yesterday to appoint Kyocera Corp. Honorary Chairman Kazuo Inamori, who also serves as Japan Airlines Corp. chairman, as a special adviser to the cabinet. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama will issue an official announcement of appointment to Inamori today.

Inamori has close relations with senior members of the Democratic Party of Japan. He became a private-sector member of the Government Revitalization Unit, but after he assumed the chairmanship of JAL, he informed Hatoyama of his intention to step down as a panel member. At that time, the prime minister reportedly asked him to become a special cabinet adviser, judging that the chairman of Kyocera and JAL would not find it difficult to serve concurrently as an adviser.

14) USTR : "Put Japan Post on level playing field with private-sector rivals"

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Wendy Cutler on Feb. 25 exchanged ideas on Japan's review of postal services with Senior

Vice Minister of Cabinet Office Kouhei Ohtsuka in Tokyo. During the meeting, she called on the Japanese government to establish a level playing field for private companies and Japan Post. She also noted that the U.S. government is concerned about Japan Post being given preferential treatment in parcel services. The U.S. Embassy in Tokyo released the statement. In reviewing postal services the government intends to allow (Japan Post) to market third sector products such as cancer insurance. Increasingly alarmed by the move, European and U.S. industrial organizations are calling on the Japanese government to be cautious about Japan Post's entry into new markets.

15) Japan-China talks on rare metals

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
February 25, 2010

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and China's Ministry of Commerce on Feb. 24 held regular vice minister-level talks in Tokyo. At the meeting the Japanese side asked China to stop controlling exports of mineral resources, including rare metals. A Chinese participant responded: "It is a justifiable system for the control of resources," the talks ending without agreement. Japan also conveyed its concern about China's system of making manufacturers disclose technological information about their IT products (the China Compulsory Certification system).

16) Nikkei to offer online subscription version from March 23

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Excerpts)  
February 25, 2010

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun will start offering an online version on March 23. It will provide reliable and accurate information with convenient functions using state-of-the-art technology. Nikkei will aim to make the online version a new media possessing both the quality of a newspaper and digital characteristics. Through the

TOKYO 00000374 008 OF 008

online version Nikkei will fulfill the role of a media organization in the Internet age.

President Tsuneo Kita, during a press conference on Feb. 24, explained the aim of publishing the online subscription version, noting, "We will offer quality journalism to those who are familiar with digital equipment such as PC's and cell phones."

The online version will provide the latest news with ample data and images on a round-the-clock basis. In addition to articles from the print version of the newspaper, the online edition will offer articles from various companies in the Nikkei group and overseas media organizations. The online edition will include information on the business scene, information useful for investment, and information on the arts, sports, health and other life-style issues.

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